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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage on KMT presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou's interviews; on the upcoming legislative election and alleged vote-buying cases in various constituencies. In terms of editorials and commentaries, on the eve of the Iowa caucuses, Chong-Pin Lin, Taiwan's former deputy defense minister, wrote in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" and offered his views on the prospects for the United States and the world if Illinois Senator Barack Obama is elected U.S. President. End summary.

"What an Obama Presidency Means"

Chong-Pin Lin, Taiwan's former deputy defense minister and president of the Foundation on International and Cross-Strait Studies in Taipei, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (1/3):

"... In short, being black is no longer a hindrance to entering the White House.

"It is also the case, therefore, that being a woman has no negative consequences for Hillary Clinton. However, voters may find their democratic ethos objecting to 28 consecutive years of a family presidency: four years of Bush senior, eight of Bush junior, eight of Bill Clinton and another eight of Hillary.

"... Obama's record on opposing the Iraq War has perhaps become his greatest campaign asset in contrast to not only Hillary Clinton, who voted for the war, but also most Republican hopefuls who have supported the war at some stage. In November, Bill Clinton's remark on TV that he opposed the Iraq War 'from the beginning' brought endless headaches to Hillary's team.

"... What would an Obama presidency augur?

"First, US withdrawal from Iraq. That will start a noticeable, though gradual, decline of US influence first in the Middle East, and then in the rest of the world. China, still far behind the US in economic and military terms, will become more formidable in the eyes of other countries.

"Second, the US will turn inward. Washington will place domestic economics and social agendas before military expansion and intervention abroad.

"Third, there will be an end to unilateralism. Washington will consult more with other powers and converse with even the 'rogue states.' Relations with the Muslim world will improve.

"Fourth, environmental concerns will be taken more seriously. Washington will no longer boycott international efforts to face global warming.

"Fifth, there will be a renaissance of spiritualism and humanism.

The US under Obama may become a world leader in the promotion of spiritual and humanistic values."

YOUNG